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Game













Chapter 1 by Kacey Farrar

GAME

Chapter 1: The game.

Mike sat back and stared at the game. It was sat, face up, the hideous monster on the front of the case grinned, evily. It had been a year, since he had used a computer. He never played with technology, mainly because it had never really appealed to him. He had always hated it but he didn't know why. Now... It was like he couldn't stay away from the game. He needed to play it, even he didn't want to.

He read the reviews online and everyone said that they didn't sleep the night after they played it. They were probably adults because his cousin, Donny, was 13 years old and when he played the game he didn't sleep for weeks. Eventually, Donny collapsed of exhaustion. He went into a coma for a while, before dying in hospital. When he did, all of his stuff got passed down to Mike. Including the game.

It was called Phobia and it was supposed to be advanced technology. You put a weird head-set on and it made everything in the game look real. You experience your worst fears. But that was the problem. Mike wasn't afraid of anything. There was the odd jumpscare, when his friends scared him, by jumping out from a corner, but he didn't have any real fears. That was why his friends had told him to play the game, he supposed.

His friends, Natasha, Adam and Reggie, were sat on his bed watching him.

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or

Terrible Twins. Mike rolled his eyes.

"Do I really have to do this?" He asked, looking at his friends.

"Yes!" Reggie and Nat said, at the same time.

They nodded, their black hair bobbing. You could tell they were brother and sister. They were both pale, with long black hair, brown eyes and crooked smiles. They weren't really twins; Reggie was older than Natasha and taller but, other than that, they were identical. Adam shook his head.

"Not if you don't want." He smiled, putting a hand on Mikes shoulder. "We could just play Sharads, again."

Reggie and Nat made kissing noises behind him, causing Adam to blush. He sat down, fumbled with his blue T-shirt and tugged a bit of his blond hair. The twins sniggered at him, ruffling their own ebony hair and posing. Mike scowled at the pair.

Why on earth did I invite those two? He asked himself. Why didn't I just invite Adam.

He and the twins had known each other since they were in year 7. They had been Donny's friends too. Adam was Mikes oldest friend, though. They had been together since year 3. Adam was the new kid. He had been bullied and Mike looked out for him. They had been best friends, ever since. When the two of them went to highschool, they met Reggie, in year 8. He introduced them to his younger sister, Natasha (Nat for short), and they became a group, immediatly. Everyone in school knew them, because of the pranks and rumors.

One kid made a rumor that Adam and Mike were boyfriends and that's when the teasing started up again. Mike hated that the Twins always said that it was true. He thought that they'd help, but no. They kept telling people that it was the truth and then Natasha started believing it herself!

Anyway, soon after, Donny died and Mike got his game. He wanted to show Adam the game. Adam was practically afraid of everything, so it wouldn't be hard for him to choose. But then Mike realised, with all the rumors that were circulating, it was too risky, for people to see the

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Login

or

Sighing, he picked up the game and inserted it into the computer. When the game loaded up, Mike turned to his friends.

- "Promise me, if something goes wrong, you'll take this off of me." Mike ordered.
- "Yeah, whatever! Get on with it!" Nat barked.
- "Wait, is that why you're afraid?" Reggie laughed, looking from Mike to Nat. "Because of what happened to Don? Listen, Donny was afraid, you are a lot more brave, so stop being so scared and just do it!"
- "Not afraid just..." He mumbled something, under his breath and plugged in the head-set, putting it on his head.

There was a buzz and everything went black. The screen flashed some pictures of weird looking creatures and names. The odd thing was inbetween a creature called 'Pyro' and another creature called 'Flora', there were a few blanks. Four blank screens and then it continued. After the intro, a dark blue screen appeared, with a light blue bubble on it. A man poked his head out of the bubble and peared out of it, like it was a window. Mike couldn't see the mans lower half, but could tell he was pretty short.

"Hey kid, I'm Hackmin, Hack for short. You could also call me Angrophobia. You don't wanna see the angry side of me!" The short man with grey skin, black hair and a white suit said.

He was hanging out of a blue bubble in the corner of the screen and spoke in a rough newyorker accent. He didn't have a nose. What caught Mikes attention most, though, was his eyes. They were like cats eyes. Red with a little black slit for the pupils.

- "Anyways, I'm what you could call a tutorial master-"
- "A tutorial master!?" Mike scoffed.
- "Shut up and listen, Stupid!" Hackmin barked, taking Micheal by surprise. He shook it off. It was supposed to be advanced technology, after all.
- "Yeh, that's right, didn't think I could here you, huh? Well, listen to me, tuts! This game is one of the scariest things, you will ever experience. And I am the one that's gonna teach you how to

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or

"Okay Mikey... Can I call you Mickey? What is your biggest fear?"

"Nothing..." Mike frowned.

Hackmin rolled his eyes, "I guess we'll throw a whole load of nothin' at you then, huh? Come on Mikey, we're all friends here, right?"

Mike laughed, shaking his head.

"What's going on, is it good?" He heard Nat asked.

"This is lame," He lied, secretly enjoying it.

Hackmins smile dropped and a scowl formed on his face.

"Who you callin' lame!?" He spat.

Water splashed at his face. This made Mike jump. He wiped the spit from his face. It was so realistic! He gasped for breath, eyes wide and mouth gaping open. Hack had scared him. Him! He shook his head, looking at the screen again. Hack was back to normal, smiling as if nothing had happened.

"Is everything okay, Mike? What's wrong?" Adam asked, putting a hand on his friends shoulder. Mike looked around.

"Nothing, the game's just messing with me, that's all. Can you see what's going on, on the computer screen?" Mike asked.

"Yeh, that Hackmin guy's waiting for you to type in your fear." Nat sighed, impatiently.

"Yeah, yeah, I get your point." He growls, typing in the first thing that came to mind. 'Spiders'.

The screen went to blackness and a charecter, called Spindle appeared. Adam jumped back and the twins laughed nervously. Spindle was a huge navy-blue spider, with fangs. He stood on his back legs, his two pairs of middle legs were crossed and his front legs were waving. He started throwing spiders at the screen. Mike heard the others scream, as the started crawling out of the screen and onto him. He didn't panic, brushing the spiders away. Spiders had never bothered him. Spindle hissed in dismay. Hackmin appeared in his bubble, next to Spindle.

"Okaykid nawya nood to huh?" Ha naysad socing the situation. He frowned turning to face

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or

The four children watched Hack and Spindle converse, in confusion. Mike crossed his arms, staring at the two.

"Uh-hu... right! Don't worry I'll sort this out and I'll tell you stats later!" Hack smiled, nodding to Spindle.

He brought up a small menu and clicked some buttons, with his clawed hand.

"You'd better!" Spindle hissed, turning into a human boy. He looked like a gough, with his eyeliner and purple hair and spoke in a soft american accent. He had his nose pierced and had a T-shirt with a cross and skull on it.

"Cos, this is your last strike, if you get this wrong," He pulled his finger across his neck, in a killing motion. "And Bogy won't be givin' you another chance, Hack... remember that."

"I..." Hackmin bit his lip, looking worried. "I'll see you later, Spin."

"Hopefully." Spindle muttered, "Hack, wait..." He climbed up to the bubble and whispered.

"If Bogy gives you any trouble, break this." He passed him a small glass spider. "I'll get the others and we'll help you."

"I can't let you do that! It could get Bogy on your tail."

"Hack, we've already lost Gren, we can't lose you too..."

Hack smiled and tapped a final button, before they went back to the main title. Spindle was gone and Hack sat, staring at the small glass spider, in his hand. He stayed like that for a minute, before Adam coughed. He jumped, remembering that he had company. He put the spider in his pocket.

"Okay!" Hackmin laughed, "Now, it seems that you haven't been completely honest, with us. We asked you to type in your worst fear. Spiders obviously have no effect on you!"

Nat elbowed Reggie in the ribs, slightly amused by the look of irritation on Mikes face.

"I told you!" Mike yelled, "I don't have a worst fear!"

"So you don't have a worst fear... You Omniphobic?"

"Am I what?" Mike frowned.

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or

Mike glared at Hack and Hack was glowing with rage. He hated it when people disrespected other people. Reggie and Adam looked at each other, worriedly, whilst Nat was amused by the whole situation. This was a contest, everyone could tell. Whoever broke first, was the weakest. A smile broke out on Hacks face.

"Are we really doing this?" He chuckled, "You're having a staring contest with me?" "So?"

Hack raised an eyebrow. He crossed his arm and leaned forward slightly.

"Kid, have you ever tried having a staring contest with something that doesn't need to blink?"

"Why?" Mike taunted, running a hand through his curly ginger hair, "You got somewhere to be?"

"No, I got all the time in the word!" Hack shook his head. He opened another menu and pulled out a can of coak.

"You on the other hand, have school. You want anything to drink?"

"It's summer holidays. And I'll have a 'Sprite'." Mike smirked leaning back.

Hack threw a can at him. It passed right through the screen and hit Mikes stomach. He smiled at Mikes expression as it rolled on the desk.

"School will have have to start again, eventually." He replied, smugly.

Mike sipped his drink, slightly annoyed. He sighed, and turned away from Hack, forgetting that he was angry for a second.

"Ha!" Hack barked. "I win!"

Mike slammed the can down, furious with himself.

"God dammit!" He yelled.

"You let a computer beat you!"

Nat was in histerics, behind him. She was rolling on the floor, laughing. Reggie giggled. Hack winked at Mike, making him even more angrier.

"You stupid machine!" Mike frowned.

The mood dropped, insantly. Mike collapsed in his seat, making his friends jump in alarm. Adam ran to him and shook his shoulders.

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Login

or

Micheals POV.

The room darkened, until Mike couldn't see his friends. He felt like he was despanded in mid air. The only light came from the small bubble, which Hack was still stood at, but his back was to Mike and he could see his full body. Just as Mike had suspected, Hackmin was small. He closed the small bubble and turned a light on. It was only a spotlight and didn't fill the whole room. It shone down on a small wooden table. Hackmin jumped down. He looked furious. He sat at the table, not looking at Mike.

"Sit down kid." He whispered.

Mike gasped and yelled.

"Where am I!?"

"Mike... calm down... I just want to-"

"No, you can't make me! Take me home! Take me home Take me-"

"Micheal, You will sit down, right now!" Hack demanded, in a tone that chilled Mike to the bone. Out of pure fear, he obeyed Hack and sat down on the chair opposite him.

"Now, you listen to me, Bucco! I will send you home later, maybe, but first we need to get something straight: I ain't a machine and you ain't invincible! You gotta be afraid o' somethin." He hesitated. "Ugh, god Bogy's gonna kill me for this... but that ain't stopped me before!" Mike, still terrified, looked around the gloom, trying to make anything out, in the darkness, his eyes hadn't adjusted yet.

"Right tell you what," Hack smiled.

Mikes attention snapped back to him. He had a little blue menu open. It was just a glowing beam of light with some options on it. The options were places this time, though. It had a picture of a beautiful place, full of grass, trees and a bright blue sky. The other place was a huge ocean. Another was a place full of rock. It had a huge crystal in the centre of it and the sky was black and full of stars. One place looked like a dessert. One was a jungle, one was just a huge place with a crack running down it and one was a huge white palace, with a huge green forest around it

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or

Mike looked at his furry clawed hand and shook his head. Hack sighed, rubbing his head.

"You know, your opinion really would matter to me, if we hadn't already changed you-"

"Wh- WHAT!?" Mike exclaimed.

Hack laughed, "Oh, I'm kidding! Look at your face... oh man, I was joking!"

Mike let out a sigh of relief.

"Yeah, your opinion wouldn't matter to me, either way!"

Mike froze again.

A sly grin crept onto Hacks face. Micheal, hesitantly looked down. He was in a grey jumpsuit and his skin was purple, long golden spikes hung from his fingers, like nails. He moaned, as he tugged at his hair. It was no longer ginger but a deep dark violet. He gasped, glaring at Hack, who was now staring back at his menu.

"Gotta tell you kid," He muttered, reveiling more places, "I don't know what phobia you are! Maybe you're porphyrophobia?" He saw the confusion on Mikes face and rolled his eyes. "The fear of purple? Nevermind... Maybe I'll take you to see Father Time, hmm?"

He offered Mike a hand. Micheal shook his head.

"That wasn't a question!" Hack yelled, grabbing Mikes wrist and pressing a button.

Chapter 2: Meeting people.

The button had a weird grandfather clock on it, with numbers from one to twelve circuling around it. Micheal gasped for air as the ground opened up and swollowed them. As they fell down, he screamed. Numbers of different font and size whizzed around them, as they tumbled down the blue, grey and white vortex. The loud tick of a clock sounded, from somwhere but Mike couldn't work out where.

He was screaming and throwing his hands around. He looked around for Hack, only to see the small man calmly sitting on a chair, falling to the ground. He had a cup of tea in his hands and was inspecting his menu. He looked up from it and nodded at Mike.

"We're about to hit the earth, so you might want to tip yourself upright, before you smack your head against the floor. In fact..." He clicked his fingers and a chair appeared. Mike stared at him.

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or

It was dark. Extremely dark. A huge clump of dust gathered in Mikes throat. He coughed it out and wiped sweat from his eyebrows. He suddenly felt weak and tired. Everything was so... abnormal. He turned to Hack, only to see the little man was nowhere to be seen. His eyes widened in Terror. Although he was happy to see the back of that idiot, he was stuck here alone in a place he didn't know.

Stumbling around, he tried to find a light source. On his way, he felt out and tripped over some things. If he didn't know better, he'd say they were cogs. A sudden groan of wood sounded behind him. Freezing, his heart thudded against his chest. The groaning didn't stop, even when he made it clear he'd heard it. There was a moment of hesitation, before a loud bang and chime came, making Mike jump out of his skin. He yelped, thrusting himself forward and grasping a strange thing, dangling from the roof.

The light snapped on and Micheal twisted his body round, to see... nobody. Nobody was behind him. No one was chasing him. He collapsed to the floor, slowing his heart down. He looked around and saw that he was right. The whole room was full of cogs and little clocks and watches, of every kind. Digital, cog-work, cukoo, sun-dial. Every singal one.

He turned around and saw a huge clock face behind him. It was like a window almost. Light shone through it, casting a shadow. He turned back and stared at the floor. Almost forgetting the situation at hand, he smiled, touching the wooden floor and tracing the patterns. A huge shadow moved over him. He stiffened a bit, before slowly turning around.

The man behind him wasn't looking at Mike; he was staring straight ahead, at the cogs and clock. Mike believed the man was waiting for an explination.

"Uhh, I didn't brake anything! I... Hackmin brought me here and I don't know where he is now." He saw he wasn't getting anywhere with the man, who had started staring at him now. The man had a slightly amused smile on his. One of his eyebrows were raised and his head was cocked to the side, slightly.

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Login

or

"What is, or in this case, 'not' finally? Were you waiting for something to happen?" Mike asked. "Yes, I was waiting for this extremely interesting and important conversation. This is important to us, because it's the first time we converse and share an event! I can already tell, you are a good man. And so I want to be on your good side! I should make myself understood. So let's find the right word. It is not 'finally' so what is it?" The man grinned.

"Eventually?" Mike wondered.

"No," The man chuckled, "As I said before, this is the first event we shared, thus it could not be 'eventually', as we have not shared any other event before hand! Do you understand?" Micheal shook his head, completely baffled.

"You don't understand?! Understatement of the century!" The man sniggered, "Well, let me put it this way: There have been no events so far for us to even remotely qualify as existant, so we can't rely on those events to have caused this event we are in right now! If there were, I would not have to introduce myself!"

"You're Father Time!" Mike smiled.

He started feeling apprehensive, as he saw a wave of confusion spread across the mans face. The man sat down on the floor and pondered for a while. This gave Micheal a few moments to get a look at him. He was tall, slender and dressed smartly. He had a long black blazer, over a white top and a bow-tie. His top hat was neatly sat on top of his black slick hair and his thin moustach was twisted into a curl. In fact, he looked like a normal human, despite the sharp teeth and blue skin. The man was staring into space.

"Unless, I'm mistaken." He looked at Micheal. "Have we met before? Just give me... approximately 5 minutes and 23 seconds!"

He flipped a golden pocket-watch out and stared at it for a while. Micheal sat next to him and peared at the little locket. There was nothing out of the ordinary about it, at all. The little clock part of it was black and the numbers and hands were red.

It's beautiful. He thought to himself. He frowned. It's weird to think such an insignificant object can be beautiful but... it really is.



There was a thud and a stinging pain slithering up and down his back. His eyes snapped open. Everything was blurry.

Home again! He smiled at himself. Wow. That was a journey and a half!

"Andy, Reggie, Nat!" He laughed, rubbing his eyes, before closing them and leaning back. "I had the weirdest dream ever!"

"Oh yeah? What was it about?" A familiar accent asked.

He slowly peeled his eyes open, to see Hack, stood over him. Father Time was there too.

"You should never look into the void!" He frowned with concern. "Especially not it's eye!"

Mike didn't say anything. The void. What was that? His head was still a little messed up. His eyes darted up at Hack. The little man was grinning down at him. The cogs and springs were still whirring around, but other than that, it was silent. The two men were waiting for Micheal to say something. Finally Hack broke the silence.

"So... uh, you just gonna sit there, or...?"

Mike scowled at him. The young boys face darkened and his eyes peirced Hack. Hack gulped, laughing, nervously.

"Oh, Y-you... uh, don't wanna talk? I get that." He smiled, backing off, as Mike stood up.

Mike lunged at him. Hack jumped away, just in time. The two of them sped, dodging cogs and clocks. Hackmin jumped up and held onto a spring and looked at Father Time.

"Ven! Feel free to jump in, when ever you're ready!" He gasped, gripping the long slinky-like thing.

"Why would I do that?" Father Time laughed, cleaning his monocule, with a napkin. "I believe that you deserve, what you're getting. The boy want's answers and so far you have not provided!"

Mike grinned, before seeing a hooded figure emerge from out of nowhere. It looked like it had pointed ears and bright yellow eyes. It had a snake like tongue and sharp white teeth. He slinked back and hid in a corner. He watched from a small gap, in the shelves.



"Very good!" The woman laughed and dissappeared, from Mikes line of view.

"Three bags full dear," Father Time smiled, nudging Hack.

The two men sniggered, peering at Mike in the shelves. He frowned, unaware of the person standing right behind him, until she grabbed him and dragged him out, by the neck.

"Now, what have we got here!?" The woman cried.

Her hand was cold and made Mike shiver. He looked up at her and gasped. She looked like a fish woman. The woman flung him to the hooded figure. He looked up into her hood. Her eyes had turned from yellow to red. Her mouth and nose were covered by a black mask, that made it's way down her neck and the rest was covered by the cloak. Her face looked like the void, but it didn't have that weird eye inside of it.

"What is this!?" The space-woman growled, hurling Mike back at Fish-lady, who gripped him by the collar of his grey suit.

"One of Bogys henchmen, I suppose!" Hack smiled.

Mike growled at him. The space-woman hit Mike around the face. Hack made a noise, which was a mix of surprise and guilt. Fish-lady grinned at him.

"A Night-terror, huh?" The woman frowned. "What is your business, here!?"

Mike didn't know what to say. He was still a little shocked, from the hit. She glared at him, making it hard for Mike to speak.

"Not talking, eh?" She dragged Mike to a small trap door.

She opened it and Mikes eyes widened. The little room was filled of grinding cogs, spikes, springs, broken glass and sharp hands of a clock. Hack and Father Time gasped.

"NO, NO, NO, NO! I was just kidding!" Hack screamed.

"Don't drop him, Flora! He's just a child! Neb, I'm telling you! Please, just hear us out!" Father Time begged, looking from Hack, to Neb, to Flora.

"H-his name's Mikey. He's an eleven year old boy that attends Penterhall Highschool. H-he was playing th-the game, and I took him in. Please, he's not a Night-terror!" Hack stuttered.

Elora stared at Michael Cha nulled him back from the little room and closed the door Cha nut

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"Are you okay, Micheal?" He asked.

"Sorry, kid!" Hack said, putting a hand on his shoulder.

Mike nodded and smiled at Hack. Maybe it was best that he made his peace with Hack. Yeah, the little man had brought him to this place, that he didn't know and nearly got him killed twice but he had to think positive. This was a new oppertunity. He could have adventures and meet new people.

"So," Father Time smiled, later on that day. "Have you seen Karma and Mother Nature, anywhere?"

"No. But they're looking for you, Hack." Neb said, turning to the man.

"Well, maybe I could message them and tell them where I am? I couldn't imagine what they need, though." He opened his menu and tapped on a picture of a tree, in a field.

A few moments later everyone was sat in the huge field. Mike smiled, stroking the grass. He lay back and laughed. For some reason, the field made him happy and relaxed. Everything was so beautiful and peaceful. The trees, surrounding the field swayed and everything was swaying, as the wind whisteled, harmoniously. Birds sang and animals made noises and the sun shone through the bright blue sky, making everything warm. Out of the places so far, this one was his favourite.

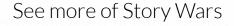
A bleat came from a bush, nearby. Micheal sat up and looked over. The back end of a brown goat was sticking out. He stood up and smiled.

"Hey, little thing, I'll help you!" He grabbed a few tufts of it's fur and pulled.

The others watched him, grinnining, silently. He gave one last pull and him and the little goat fell back. Mike hit the ground and the little goat was sat on top of him. His eyes were closed. He had been winded, when he hit the ground, so he was trying to get his breath back.

"Thanks, I didn't think I'd ever get out!" A voice came.

Mikes eyes snapped open. A girl was sat on top of him. Micheal blinked. The girl giggled. She stood up and stood over Mike. Much to his surprise, the child was half goat, half human. She gripped down at him, her little tale shaking like crazy.



Login

or

"Honey, do you know where Mommy is?" He asked.

"Uh..." She tilted her head. "Yeah, she said she's going to find Hack. And now she's there!"
Karma pointed behind Mike. Micheal looked up, to see a woman, wearing an orange hoodie, standing behind him. He was expecting another slap but instead, the woman ruffled his hair.
Father Time smiled at her, as she glided out from the tree. Long white wings trailed behind her.
Mike followed her out and stood with the others.

Mother nature looked at Hack.

"Thank god I found you in time!" She said.

The others looked at the two.

"Bogy's looking for you. He's heard about Micheal."

"How'd ya know his name?" Hack frowned.

"Everyone knows. They're all speaking about it." Mother nature looked at Mike then whispered to the group. "Bogy says that Micheal is the one. Do you know what this means Hack? If Bogy, or his minions, finds you two, then-"

"I know... Spindle already told me." Hack frowned.

"Just let that old bogy-brain lay a hand on either of you two!" Flora growled. "I don't know Micheal that well, but already I can see he's a good kid! And Hack, you're our closest friend... He can't... y'know... can he?"

"Flora," Hack looked at her. "You know what Bogy's capable of... If he wanted to, he could get you guys to murder us right now..."

The others looked at one another uneasily. Karma jumped down from Father Time, whilst the adults were speaking, and stood with Micheal. She picked a small flower and gave it to him.

- "Thanks, Karma." He smiled, "That's really sweet... aren't you going back with your dad?"
- "Nah, they're talking about boring adult stuff."
- "Yeah." Mike laughed. "How old are you anyway?"
- "Six and a half!" She grinned.
- "Oh. So have you ever met this... Bogy?"

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Micheal nodded, but said nothing. He didn't know how to comfort her so, instead, he hugged her

"I can't imagine what it must be like..." He muttered. "To live in fear everyday. To watch your family slip away and your friends get hurt." Karma stared at him. "I can't imagine it. But I know it hurts, more than anything to have someone tare you away from the things you know and love and put you in a scary situation. And you're not able to control it so... make the best of it. Find the good things in life. I know it seems bad now but... It will get better. I promise. I'll help make it better. No matter what."

Karma hugged him back and started crying. He looked up, realising that the others had stopped speaking. They were watching the two. Father Time and Mother nature sat next to the two, and smiled. Flora and Neb watched them. Hack was frowning at the floor.

"Well, I'm going to the pond!" Flora grinned, slipping away.

"I'm going to go in the forest and see if I can find Spindle." Neb sighed.

"Well, we're going to put this tired little miss to bed, for a nap." Mother nature smiled and Father Time followed her in.

"Oh and you two can stay if you want." he said.

They went into the huge tree. Hack stepped forward, looking sad. He smiled at Mike. Mike smiled back. The little man sat next to the young boy.

"I just wanted you to know... Uh," Hack rubbed his neck, taking his hat off. "I'm not really good with words... Uh, You were good today kid. Especially seeing as it's your first day and I'm actually starting to believe you. You aren't afraid of anything. Well, except dying, but, heh, who isn't!" Mike watched him.

"Look, what I'm trying to say is: It's really sweet, what you said to Karma. About family and friends. I'm sorry about taking you away from your family. I didn't realise that... The truth is, I know what it's like to lose people you love to idiots, like... well, like me. And you're right... It gets better."

"What was her name?" Mike asked.

Hack raised his eyebrowse. Micheal tilted his head. He was interesting, to Hack. He was

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or

He took a picture from his pocket. It was of a tall woman with red feathers and a beak. She was wearing a dress and was holding Hack by his leg. Hack was dangling upside down and looked as if he was screaming his head off. Mike laughed, causing Hack to grin.

"What happened? Why is everything different now? What changed? What happened to Lilac and the people that Karma told me about? Who is Bogy? What are Night Terrors?" Mike asked, suddenly.

Hack looked up at him and nodded.

"I'll tell you."

Chapter 3: Back to the past.

Father Time rocked his baby boy back and forth. Karma smiled. Her little tail zoomed left and right, whilst Mother nature platted her hair.

"Dear, did Deji ask us to bring the baby, too?" She asked.

"I don't know..." Father time smiled.

"Take him just, in case." I called from the kitchen.

Lilac grinned at me, ruffling my hair.

"Leave off, babes. I look fine!" I scowled.

She blew a rasberry at me. She looked around and sat on the couch, next to Mother nature and Karma. I sat on the puff.

"So, you nervous about tonight?" Mother nature asked.

"Hm? Oh... the ceremony. Yeah, pretty nervous." Lilac laughed.

"Don't be." I laughed, reasuringly. "Trust me, Deji has been ruling this realm for over 2004 years! If you weren't right for the job, then he wouldn't have picked you. You are definitly worthy and capable of this."

"Thanks Hack! You're so sweet!" Lilac smiled, kissing me on the cheek.

"I can't believe you were lucky enough to be elected! Deji must really like you. Let's just hope a certain someone doesn't interrupt." Father time frowned, bounding the baby on his knee.

"Don't even start!" Lilac frowned.

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or

How wrong was I...

We arrived at the palace, later and it looked magnificent. Spindle, Neb, Flora, Venom, Mayhem, Anyese, Ginger and Grendlim were waiting for us. They're our friends. I'll take you to visit them later. Anyway, together we all went in to Deji's castle. Tonight was the night that Lilac was gonna become Empress of the Phobias. She would be incharge of us, whilst Deji was ill or away and she would be heir to the throne, when Deji had to step down. We were all looking forward to it. We walked in and the whole place was brilliant.

The walls were painted a cream clour. The carpet was red and everything was lit up beautifully. Anyese called out Deji's name and, immediately, he appeared in front of them. He smiled at them and bowed, before standing straight. He was a humble man, that looked a bit like a porcupine. He was covered in fur from head to toe, he had a large hamster-like nose and purple spikes on his back.

"Hello, everybody, I humbly welcome you to my wonderous house!" He nodded.

"What?" We all said, at the same time.

"Why are you speaking like a moron?" I asked.

I recieved a sharp elbow in the ribs, from Lilac. I frowned rolling my eyes.

Deji laughed.

"Pardon my asking, but does one not have permission to make a joke. I did rather think thine friends had a sence of humor, once. I didn't realise thine friends developed a stick up their backside!"

I snorted. He smiled.

"It's great to see you all again. God, it's been ages!" Deji said, going back to his old self. "I've heard a lot of things about you guys. Such as you two having two children. Well done, Brother, I'm glad you've finally married!" He smiled at Father Time.

He bent down to see little Karma and her little brother.

"What are their names?" He smiled.

"Mall the girl is called Karma" Eather Time said "The how deep! they a name Karma is

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"Me too!" Father Time agreed.

"I've also heard that a few of you have been married. I will congratulate each of you, in tonights ceremony. Which also reminds me. Lilac, I know you are a little nervous about tonight but, really I assure you, you have nothing to fear. And... between you and me, I spoke to Bogy and he's promised to be on his best behaviour! Come on then. All the Phobias are waiting in the hall..." He smiled at his friends, "And one musn't keep them waiting, as they whine like donkeys when they grow impacient!"

He chuckled, leading his friends to the main room.

The room was crowded with people. There were phobias of every different kind:

Sound-Acousticophobia,

Flight-Aerophobia,

Pain-Agliophobia,

Animals-Agrizoophobia,

Sharp, pointy objects- Aichmophobia,

Cats-Ailurophobia,

Peoples opinions of you and arguments- Allodoxaphobia.

Forgetting-Amnesiphobia,

Anger-Angrophobia,

People/society-Anthropophobia,

Infinity-Apeirophobia,

Water-Aquaphobia,

Spiders-Anachraphobia,

Lonliness- Autophobia,

Failing/taking risks- Atychiphobia,

Being forgotten- Athazagoraphobia,

Puppets- Automatonophobia,

Gravity-Barophobia,

Bogyman-Bogyphobia,

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

Time-Chronophobia,

Tight spaces- Claustrophobia,

Locked in tight space- Cleisiophobia/ cleithrophobia,

Scary situation- Counterphobia,

Dogs-Cynophobia,

Decision-Decidophobia,

Insanity- Dementophobia,

School-Didaskaleinophobia,

Justice/fate/karma- Dikephobia,

Praise-Doxophobia,

Accidents- Dystychophobia,

Home-Ecophobia,

Electicity- Electrophobia,

Freedom-Eleutherphobia,

Blushing-Ereuthophobia,

Talking in public- Glossophobia,

Being touched-Haphephobia,

Errors-Harmartophobia,

Blood-Hemophobia,

Reptiles-Herpetophobia,

Gay/Lesbians-Homophobia,

Open spaces- Kenophobia,

Talking-Laliphobia,

Dark-Lygophobia,

Punishment/beating- Mastigophobia,

Memories- Mnemophobia,

Death/Dead things- Necrophobia,

Step-Mom-Novercaphobia,

Crowds-Ochlophobia,

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Login

or

Dolls-Pediophobia,

Fear-Phobophobia,

Fire-Pyrophobia,

Beaten by a rod-Rhabdaphobia,

Shadows-Sciaphobia,

Decay-Sepiophobia,

Silence-Sedatephobia,

Being dependent-Soteriophobia,

Space-Spacephobia,

Poison-Toxicphobia,

Chemicals- Chemophobia.

In the front of all of the tables, was on big, rectangular table. It had 15 chairs and Bogy was sat in one of them, looking frustrated. His black fur shone in the light and his own dark purple spikes stood on end. He looked up and glared at me and Lilac.

"Good evening brother!" Father Time smiled, trying to ease the tension. Bogy didn't reply instead he kept glaring at us. Everyone sat in a seat, ready for the ceremony to begin. The lights dimmed and curtains slid open. Deji stood at a stand on the stage. He smiled at his friends and the other phobias.

"Good afternoon, everybody! I have excellant news. As, you know I have been Emporer and ruler over the phobias for 2004 and a half years. The time has come to choose a new Emperor and heir to the throne."

A series of 'awws' filled the room. Deji smiled, sadly.

"I know. I'm sad too. I had so much fun, getting to know everybody and-"

There was a sound of a scraping chair, as Bogy stood up and left the room. Deji frowned and looked over at the corner of the room. He nodded to a man, who followed Bogy out of the room. He sighed and continued.

"Anyway, this time, I've decided to break tradition... twice!"

A crowd of suprised murmurs and whispered echoed in the room.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

"Firstly, we have, my brother, Father Time and Mother nature and their children, Karma and Finley, we must give Karma her Phobia and give her the group, she needs. Karma come up here please."

Karma jumped up and stumbled on stage.

"Everyone meet Karma VonTime. She is Dikephobia and will be attending Justice and Fate, on her 5th birthday." He helped the little Karma back off the stage. "And we have little Finley." Father Time passed Finley up.

"Now, if I'm not wrong, Fin is your second son, but third child?"

The parents nodded.

"Well, Finley is an Infinity Phobia and he will be attending Infinty, on his 5th birthday."

"Next, we have a few marriages. We have Flora and Neb, who were married 5 months ago, today. Happy 5 month anniversery, you two! Then we have Venom, Vendrodict VonTime and Mother natures child, and Mayhem. Those two are getting married! Congratulations to you two, I'll be expecting my invitation, through the mail any time now!"

"Don't hold your breath!" Someone muttured from the crowd.

"I heard that, nephew!" Deji said.

Venom rolled his eyes.

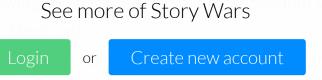
"Don't think I won't come down there, Venom, I'm still your uncle!"

The room filled with laughter. Venom and Mayhem chuckled from the front.

"Moving on," Deji smiled. "We have an extremely close friend of mine and my brother have gotten married. Well done Ginger and Anyese! It seems like almost all my brothers are getting married! Because the last marriage we have tonight, is my second to youngest brother, Hackmin. He's marrying a very special lady. Miss Lilac Menfrod! I wish these people the happiest marriage and I hope they have the greatest time together!"

I smiled at my brother. As kids, me and him were the closest people ever. He winked at me, before going back to the ceremony.

"And that brings me to the next and final thing: The Empress! This young woman has done many



she got to Deji.

"Straighten up, Lilac, I should be the one bowing to you." He took of a pendint from his neck and held it in front of her. "When I give you this pendint to wear, you are representing me and my ancestors."

"With this pendint you must promise and swear to us your loyalty, allegiance and your integritty to our realm! For, when you wear this, the people depend on you and you alone. It will be hard at times. You will gain all the powers are realm has to offer! But with great power, comes great responsability! Do you understand this?"

Lilac smiled, nodding.

"I understand and I swear I will do what ever it takes to help the people in our realm through hard times and make things better. I promise, I'll try my best!"

"I know you will," He placed the pendint over her head.

A white beam of light shone and, when it cleared, Lilac was wearing a white robe-like dress. A green crown made of vines was sat on her head and she had a staff in her hand. She looked at her self, before smiling and muttering.

"Cool..."

"Indeed!" Deji laughed.

Then he frowned. The room got cold and a black smoke moved across the floor. There was a loud demonic laugh and a black figure moved onto the stage. Deji's eyes widened and he yelled at Lilac to get off of the stage. The figure started forming. It was Bogy.

"Bogy! What the hell do you think you're-!?"

"Oh, what's wrong brother!? Is one not amused!?" He cackled.

He strode over to Lilac looking different now. His body caved inward, the spikes on his back stood on end and he wore a mask made of bone. His red eyes gleamed through the mask.

"HellO, Empress. I do hope you don't mind my saying, but you look lovely tonight!" Bogy grinned.

"Especially with that necklace. Can I have it?"

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Login

or

He tried to grab the pendit but a shock of electricity spat at him.

"Fool!" Lilac yelled, "You can't take the pendint without my concent!"

Bogy hissed at her. Then he slinked back, a broad grin on his face. He looked at her in a funny way, then he glanced at me before, turning back to her.

"That's right, I need your permission, right?"

He clicked his fingers and it suddenly felt like the lower part of my body and my back were filled with lava. I fell to the floor, screaming in agony. My older brother, Vendrodict, grabbed me and tried to calm me down. But he soon realised that something was wrong.

"Hack! No!" I heard Lilac yell, before falling unconcious...

Chapter 4: A nasty encounter.

Mike was listening, intently, to Hack. He stared at the man and waited. Hack looked up at him, with a sad smile.

"Then I woke up, 5 and a half months later. That was the last time I saw our Lil. Her laugh and smile still stays with me but... God that last scream of hers haunts me." He bit his lip and turned his face. "Now I don't even know if she's alive or not... I don't know what happened to him." Mike looked slightly confused.

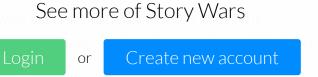
"Bogy, I mean. One moment he was our little brother, the next, he's taken my wife, damaged our older brother and murdered our nephew... he's... I just wish that things were back to normal." He sighed and got a can of coak from his inventory.

Mike didn't know what to say. He had never experienced something like this before. He once had a neighbour, who reminded him of Hack. His name was Mr. Demins. When his wife died, the only thing that would cheer him up was to speak about it or make jokes. That gave Micheal an idea.

"Well, maybe if you wish upon a star, really hard-"

Hack snorted, making fizz shoot from his nose. He coughed and hiccupped, before laughing. "You're alright kid!" He smiled, punching Mikes arm.

Micheal smiled back.



They looked at the tall tree. In the big hole was a glass window. Mother nature and Father Time were stood with Karma. They smiled at the pair, before frowning. Suddenly, they were waving their arms. The wind picked up and everything got cold. Mike and Hack waved back, not realising. They waved and pointed.

Hack tilted his head "What!?"

"Hack! Mikey! Watch out!" A voice yelled.

It was Spindle. He and Neb were stood near the tree.

"Behind you!"

Before Mike could even turn, the thing hit him on the back of his head, sending him flying. He groaned and sat up, to see a tall man standing over him. He was musculer and strong. His ginger hair was spiked upwards. He wore a black top, underneath his red leather jacket. A black eyepatch covered his left eye. He had sharp teeth and a red eye. One arm was missing, replaced by a ray gun.

Behind him, was a tall man, that looked like a tree. Hack jumped at the ginger man but was stopped by tree man who had the sharpest reflexes Micheal had ever seen. The ginger man leaned closer and grinned at Mike. His breath smelt of whiskey.

"Hey there Mikey boy!"

"Leave him alone Grey!" Hack yelled. "The boy ain't done nothin' wrong. He didn't wanna come, I braught him! You, Botney, Ask, Bogy, he don't any o' ya!"

"Oh, Hackmin, I knew you had a heart, somewhere in there!" The man laughed, receiving a withering scowl from Hack and Micheal. "I mean, sure it's a little hollow and shrucken but... You're right! The kid don't know me."

He turned to Micheal.

"Hey kid, the names Edward Grey. I'm Electrophobia. Fear of electricity. People just call me Doctor Grey, Grey or just Doctor-"

"Though I have a few other names for him." Hack hissed.

Crows hand short to Hack and his bright rad ava nairead him. The grin returned to the Doctors

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

- "Now, just you shut your mouth!" He whispered, tears forming in his eyes.
- "Ha! She was lovely, wasn't she? Li'l darlin' she was! What was her name again?"
- "Shut up..." Hack muttered, not daring to make eye contact with anyone.
- "Naw, that wasn't it. It was Lilac. But you called her Lily, din't ya?" The man laughed. "She really meant somethin' to ya didn-"

In one quick movement, Hack squirmed from Botneys grasp and jumped at Grey. The man screamed in anguish, as Hack snarled and clawed at his face. Grey threw him to the ground and pointed his gun hand at the man.

Instinctively, Mike swang his leg round and kicked the mans leg, causing it to buckle. He fell to the ground. Hack smiled at Mike greatfully.

"You're going to pay for that!" Grey jumped up and tried to grab Micheal but Nebula jumped in. She grabbed some dust from a small bag, she had, and threw it in Grey's face. It shone like a million stars and Grey stumbled backwards, coughing and spluttering. Suddenly, Karma was behind the man. She got on all fours and he tumbled over her, falling straight onto Botney, who was chasing Father Time and Hack. Spindle, as fast as light, wrapped them in web, whilst Mother Nature tangled them in vines. The pair wriggled in their coils. Hack and the others laughed at them. He high-fived Mike and ruffled his purple hair.

"Ha! You see!" Spindle hissed. "You mess with one of us, you mess with all of us!" A smile formed on Grey's face.

"You mess with us, you mess with the Bogy Man! And trust me, that's a ride you're just too small for," He grinned at Hack, "No puns intended."

"Speaking of the Bogy, he got us a new pet, wanna meat him?" Botney laughed.

At that moment a large, snake-like creature shot out from the ground. It had purple scales and a furry green under-belly. It screeched and the colour drained from Hacks face.

- "Th-that's a nice..." Mother Nature gulped, "Pet. What's it's n-name?"
- "Phobias, meet nameless!" Grey yelled, over the sound of the snake hissing, above them.
- "Nameless, play fetch!"



Login

or

"Well, this is non of my business!" She said, dipping back under the water.

Nameless slid threw the trees and looked around. Not seeing anybody, he retreated. Everyone came out of their hiding place. Mike laughed, weakly.

"Oh, my heart was in my throat!" Hackmin panted.

Flora hit him on the back of the head. He frowned at her, rubbing his head, gingerly.

"What on earth just happened!? Why do you always go looking for trouble?" She spat.

"He didn't. Those guys came after them!" Neb sighed.

"Wait... 'those guys', as in plural, I only saw the snake."

"Well, urr... You know Grey and Botney?" Hack smiled, sheepishly.

"What!? Are you completely suicidal?" Flora bit her lip.

She had a funny look on her face. Then the look turned into pure fear. She screamed and Hack realised that she wasn't looking at him. He turned but not quick enough. There was a blinding flash of light and when it cleared, Hackmin and Mike were gone, leaving only Grey, Botney and Nameless lurking, broad grins on their face and a look of satisfaction in their eyes.

Bits of plant and web were stuck to their clothes.

"Let this be an example for you guys. You mess with Bogy, you don't get away with it!" Grey mocked.

"Leave uncle Hack and Mikey alone!" Karma cried.

The three villans laughed at her determination and Mother nature had to hug Karma to stop her from jumping at them.

"What are you going to do to them!?" Father Time demanded.

"Well what happens to anybody who's a traitor?" Botney asked.

"And for what these two have done, it won't be a quick death either!" Grey cackled.

Saying that, he turned a dial on his wrist and the trio disappeared.

Micheal awoke a few hours later, to see Hack stood over him, holding his head. Mike gasped, as pain shot up his left leg and his spine.

"I'm chacking to conify only a got any head injuries." Hack muttered "Don't try to mayor Vouly o

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

He moved over to a few dark shapes and growled. One of the shapes whimpered, whilst the other elbowed it and the last, smallest, one laughed. From the looks of it they were only children. He gave a sigh of relief.

"Come on out, I ain't here to hurt nobody."

A small black hand poked out and Hack smiled.

"That's it. Come'ere. Don't be 'fraid."

It came further out and giggled. It was only little. His legs and arms had black and white striped on them. His body was fully black, like his hair. His face was white and he was covered in fur. He wore green shorts and flip-flops.

"Who're you then?" Hack smiled, softly, pulling the boy up.

"Gover!" The boy gurgled, flapping his arms.

"Gover, huh?"

"No," Another voice came. A girl stepped out. Hack estimated that she was around thirteen. She looked a little bit like the little boy, but her body and arms were red. She wore a denim skirt with black and purple tites and a black top. Two tiny yellow horns poked out of her black and white afro.

"His name's Grover, not Gover. He hasn't learned to say his 'R's' yet."

"I'm his older sister," She continued, absent mindedly, "My name's Red. Red Folding." Hack smiled at her, nodding. He held Grover in his arms. Red was about the same size as Hack, if not a little taller, which was a little intimidating, in Hacks opinion.

"Who's the other one?" He gestured to the last figure.

"That's Ant Cowerd. He lives up to his name!" Red laughed, pulling the boy out.

"He isn't related to us, we just found him here, when Grenlim braught us."

"Grendlim!?" Hack yelped.

"Yeah, she was nice but... they turned her different. She became a night terror." Ant whispered.

Ant was exactly the same size as Mike. He wore a grey jacket and blue pants. He looked like a human, with grey scaled skin and emerald-green eyes. His hair was white and feathery.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

"I could mend it," Ant smiled, before blushing and looking away, "I mean, if you want t0..." Shy, too. Hack added.

"It would help us."

He watched as Ant slowly inched his way over to Micheal. Mike moaned in his sleep, causing Ant to back up a bit. The lizard-like boy leaned over him and pulled one of his eyes open. Getting a responce, Ant smiled.

"What's 'is name?" He asked Hack.

Once he was told, he turned back to the sleeping boy.

"Mike, I'mma try wrap your leg up, 'kay?" Not getting an answer, he pulled some straw and a twig out of a huge pile of hay. He put the stick under his leg, as a support, and weaved the straw together, pulling the stick and tightly putting pressure on Mikes leg.

"Is that okay, Mike?" Ant asked.

"Ohhh," Mike groaned, "Adam, is that you?"

Ant looked a little taken aback. He shook his head.

"No, I'm Ant." The lizard-boy smiled, softly. "Hack told me you're called Micheal. Can you tell me anything about yourself, Hack or what you were doing before you were here."

"I'm eleven, Hack's stubborn and we were being chased by a cyborg, tree-man and giant snake." Mike sighed, propping himself up.

Red laughed, sarcastically, and raised an eyebrow, skeptically.

Hack nodded. "Sounds about right. He has no head injuries, though. I've already checked."

Ant helped pick up Mike and he sat him on a little bench. Mike smiled, greatfully.

"Thanks. Sorry about earlier, you just remind me of my friend, Adam."

"Don't worry." Ant shrugged.

"That was pretty nifty work you did there, with the stick and straw." Hack commented, gesturing to the bandage around Mikes leg.

Ant blushed and rubbed the back of his neck. Beads of sweat formed on his head.

"Oh... well, yeah. My mom was a nurse and she had to teach me these stuff. She was amazing at

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

At that moment, Reds head snapped over at Micheal, causing him to jump. She grinned, as he blushed at being caught staring. She waved at him.

"You gettin' a good look, Grape?" She mocked.

He frowned, realising she was making fun of him.

"Dunno? What do you think, Tomato?" He replied, snidely.

Ant sniggered, hiding his face. Red smiled at Mikey, letting him no that it was only a friendly joke.

She held her hand out to him. He shook it.

"The name's Red. You don't mind if I call you Grape, do you?" She asked, "You know, as a nickname."

"Sure, you can call me Grape," Mike nodded, "If I can call you Tomato... Nevermind, it's too long. What about Toma?"

"No that's stupid," Red growled.

"Well actually," Ant piped up, "A toma is a person of adjacent parts of Liberia and Guinea." Red gave him a weird look, that scared Ant for a second. Then the look was replaced by an expression that he'd almost call impressed.

"Okay, brainiack, maybe being a Toma isn't so bad. Fine my nickname is Toma!" She smiled. "And your name is Google, because you know a lot!"

Ant blinked, not used to receiving praise. He felt himself grow hot and turned his head. He watched Mike stare at him, out of the corner of his eye. He daren't look at him.

They think I'm smart? He wondered and shook his head. No, they don't, they're just being nice to me. Remember what dad said. 'Tis a sin to have pride. I'll go straight to hell if I think like that. He sighed and shook his head again. Mike, realising that he was staring again looked over at Hack, who was examining the bars of the cell.

"Da-" Mike paused, realising his mistake.

"What was that?" asked Hack, turning to Mike.

"Nothing I just banged my leg." He lied. "Anyway, Hack, what're you doing?"

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

bounced Grover on her knees and grinned. Ant stared at the roof, in deep thought and Mike couldn't help but which him, wondering what he was thinking.

He suddenly felt a weird sensation. Something inside of him was screaming. Then it spoke to him.

Do you want to know? It asked. Listen to what he's thinking. Do it! Try.

Mike did. He stared at Ant and wanted more than anything to know. He glared at him, until his eyes forced him to blink. He tried again and it came to him. It was only a small flicker. But it was definitely there. He tried again and again it came, for longer this time, though. He told it to come back. He heard Ant make a weird noise, but he didn't stop.

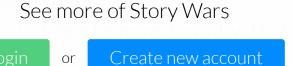
Go on! The voice urged. Try harder! Do it!

And there it was Mike saw it. A young boy with sandy yellow hair running on the beach, with a tall slim woman. The woman had brown hair and was wearing a blue top and white shorts. The woman had a purple bruise on her arm. She was very pale. Then, there was a flash and the boy and the woman were sat in bed. The woman was singing 'My little sunshine'. There was a slam of a door and the pair flinched, in fear, as a man yelled. Another flash and they were cowaring in a corner, whilst the man moved closer to them. His fists clenched and he was bright red. He grabbed the boy and the woman screamed, scratching at him. The man hit her and she didn't move. There was one last flash and the sandy-haired boy was stood at a grave. The man came up behind him and squeezed his shoulder. Mike got a closer look at the man. He was red-faced with some white patches. He had big circular glasses and brown hair, that was bolding in the centre. The man wore those black suits, with the white thing in his collar, like a vicar wears.

Mike looked, horrified, at Ant. The boy frowned at Mike indignantly, before looking away. Mike realised it was silent. He looked at Hack, who had stopped whistling and was sat staring at the pair, his mouth stuck in an 'O' shape. He blinked and went back to work. They waited a few moments, before Hack sat on the bench again.

"Any escape?" Toma asked.

"Nah, those bars are made of pure titanium. Probably bribed Metallophobia. I knew that guy



"Oh, well that's less good." He frowned, looking at Mike, who had paled.

Hack looked at the boy and a wave of guilt washed over him. He had forgotten that Mike was even there. Mike hid his head in his hands. Hack ruffled his hair, looking sorry. Mike grinned, weakly at him, trying not to cry.

"I'm gonna get us outta here, okay kid." Hack promised, filled with determination. "And when I do, I'm gonna get your leg fixed and you'll be home, before you know it!"

He looked around again. "Spindle was right: for a rich guy, Bogy doesn't bother decorating much!"

An idea lept to Mike's mind. He smiled, grabbing Hack and throwing him up in the air. The little man screamed, as Mike caught him.

"Hack, you're a genius!"

"I'm sure I am," Hack frowned, "But if you do that again, I'll rip your head off!"

"Sorry," Mike giggled, "But do you have it? That thing that Spindle gave you?!"

Hack gasped, pulling a small glass spider out of his pocket.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Mike punctuated each 'yes', by throwing his fist into the air.

Chapter 5: Great escape (Sort of...).

Toma and Grover looked at each other, a 'What the hell' look on their faces. Ant peered at the group.

"Uh..." He looked at the spider and frowned. "Is that a teleporter?"

Hack blinked at him, in surprise. Not even he knew what that was at first glance. He didn't say anything and just passed it to Ant, who examined it.

"I don't know how to use it," Hack lied. He wanted to see if Ant could work it out. Hack sat and told stories to Grover, watching Mike and Toma speak to Ant. He was tinkering with the little ornament, with a smile on his face.

Toma got bored after a while and left the two alone. Mike looked solemnly at Ant. He elbowed him playfully. Ant flinched and stared at Mike with an expression Mike found hilarious. It was a mix of 'was it something I did?' and 'do that again, I dare you!'. He laughed at the boy and Ant

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

"The fear of purple?" Hack called over, mid-way through his story, before going back to it.

"No, I don't know what I am, yet." He frowned, irritably. "What do you mean Exp?"

"Well, experience... in this game." Ant explained, "I don't really think it's a game anymore. Maybe dad was right... these games are sinful."

Mike raised an eyebrow at his new friend.

What does he mean sinful? Maybe that man I saw in Ant's memory is a vicar, his dad. A sudden sickening feeling washed over Mike, as he realised something. That would make the woman his mother and the little boy was him. His mom died because of...

Just the thought of it made him sick, so he tried talking and pushing the thought out of his head.

"You're right this isn't a game," He said, "I'm not a phobia, though. I'm a human. I was playing the game with my friends and Hack braught me here. I met some good people and you should see Father Time's house and Mother Natures garden! They have a little girl called Karma," Mike babbled on, not realising that Ant was so absorbed in his work that he wasn't listening. "Aha!" Ant exclaimed, passing it to Hack, "You smash it on the ground! I've seen spindle use it before, but it's all pixelated, on the screen. You just have to find the right binary coads and match them up with the patterns on the spider, it's simple really. All one's and zero's."

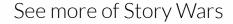
Hack smiled. "Count me impressed!"

"Well, if you're gonna smash it, do it soon," Toma yelled, from the window. "There are some people coming here!"

"Okay, everyone hold on to one another." Hack ordered and the children held each others hand. Hack grabbed Mike's hand and smashed the bottle on the floor. A bright green dust filled the room and they were suddenly falling through a long tunnel, glowing bright green. Toma screamed, grasping Grover, who was clapping his hands in delight. Mike, who was used to this, now, looked at Ant. His eyes were wide and he was squealing in terror.

"Hey!" Hack yelled over the noise. "I know where we're going! I'll have to get the ship, or we'll suffocate."

"I'll only he a moment Mike come here!"



Login

or

Hack grinned back, shrugging and gave him a 'don't judge me' look. Mike looked over at the others.

"Ant's probably multi-pho," Hack said, out of nowhere. "Just incase you were wondering."

"What? What's multi-pho?" Mike asked,

"Have multiple phobias, like Lilac. It rarely happens but you're multi-pho, when you play an important part in the Phobia realm. Like Lilac, she was future empress. Ant's probably going to play an important part too. I'm not too sure about what Grover or Toma are. You might actually be upackmin!" Hack smiled.

"What's upackmin?"

"Nowt much, what's up with you Micheal?"

"Hey!" Mike growled, "No stupid jokes, I hate stupid jokes!"

"Oh shut up, you love it!" Hack laughed.

On that note, he opened his inventory and pressed something. A large metal vessel opened and swallowed them. They were sat in a nice place now. It was all black. The only light came from a wall full of computers and a few desks.

"Do you recognise this place, Mike?" Hack asked.

Mike shook his head, sitting down in a seat, somewhere.

"What if I did this?" He turned the computers off and flicked a switch. A dim spot-light shone on the table Mike was sat at and a small memory swam back to him. He smiled.

"This is the first place I came to, when I arrived here!" He laughed.

"You guessed it, kid!"

"Isn't this amazing, Ant?" Red smiled.

Getting no answer, she looked around "Ant?"

Hack raised an eyebrow. He flicked another switch and the whole place lit up. Ant was passed out, on the couch.

"Poor fella, must have a fear of heights, or somethin;" Hack smiled at Mike, who was staring at the scenery.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

A weird sound escaped the fireplace and a large black creature fell out of the chimney. Ash dashed across the carpet and the walls were covered with soot. The creature sat up and looked at Hack.

"This is Pyro," Hack grunted, as it jumped up and rolled on the couch. "Pyrophobia, fear of fire." The creature rushed out of the room, much to Hacks disapproval.

"No, no, no!" He scowled.

This must be the kitchen! Mike thought, looking around. A chandilier hung from the room and there was an island counter in the centre of the room, surrounded by a sink, washing machine, stove, cooker, dryer and dishwasher. Fancy spice-racks and knife holders were sat on top of a silver fridge-freezer. A coffee machine, a microwave and chopping boards were on the counter. Pyro gripped the edge of the work-top. A small cup rested on the edge. Hack paused, the others stood behind him, watching in amusement.

"Py, no!" Hack warned, waving a finger at him, "Don't,"

Pyro opened his mouth and his lips curled into a grin. He bobbed his head from side to side, like it was a game. Toma smiled at the creature. It made a weird sound.

"Pyro, no!" Hack yelled jumping back.

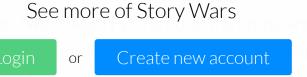
The creature let fire erupt out of it's throat. Fire alarms wailed and Pyro screamed running around of the room.

"Not again," Hack yelled, over the noise and rushed over to the corner. He came back with a fire-extinguisher. He set it off. The thing threw him back and he was flying around the room on the bottle.

When it finally put the fire out, Hack hung off of the chandilier, looking down at his house, which looked like a bomb had hit. Pyro, who had stopped running in circles, flew up and licked his owners face, affectionately. Hack smiled at him.

"I really hate you!" He growled.

Pyro sneezed, covering Hack in snot laced with black soot. Hack wiped it off, sighed and flopped back to his originnal position.



"By the skin of their teeth," Spindle added.

"That doesn't matter," Mother Nature frowned, "Where are you two!?"

Hack looked on his moniters a few 1's and 0's appearred. Smiling, he looked back at the screen.

"I'm on Gingers current,"

"Great! We'll come to you!" Karma smiled, pressing a button.

"NO, NO, NO, NO!" All the adults yelled.

Too late. Hack yelped and fell backwards, whilst the others appeared in the room. He stumbled onto the fire-extinguisher. Again, it flung him around the room and once again he was tangled with the fancy lights, hanging from his ceiling. He looked down at his friends and sighed.

"I'm getting too old for this!"

They laughed, rushing to Mike and pulling Hack down from the roof.

Karma squeezed Mike, whilst Father time ruffled his hair. Spindle, Neb and Flora spoke to Hack. Mother Nature ran into the room and smiled at them. She was dressed in a dazzling white dress with a fluffy white sash and crown. Her ginger hair was in a tight bun. She looked at Mike and gasped, sitting besides him. Mother Nature touched his broken leg and he moaned. She looked up and glared at Hack.

"I suppose this is your doing!" She sighed.

"It's not like I purposely tried to hurt the kid," Hack growled, "He just sorta' fell out of the current Grey put us in and I wasn't quick enough to catch him..."

"Yes, but you did purposely bring him to Phobia, thus rising his life and getting him into this mess. Am I wrong, Hack? And if I'm not mistaken, you should be learning from your sisters mistakes!" Mother Nature spat, before turning nice again, "I'm not doing any of this to hurt you, Hack. We have just seen this before and know it never ends well."

Hack didn't look at her. He bit his lip and stared at the ground and daren't look up. He felt the others eyes peircing him.

"You don't want Micheal getting hurt, do you?" Mother Nature asked.

At this Hackwinson and looked up looking offended

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

"Would you leave off!" He hissed, taking the others by surprise. "Hack has only just escaped and already you're putting pressure on him!"

- "Yeh, Mikey's perfectly fine how he is now," Flora shrugged.
- "Guys..." Mike whispered.
- "And he seems to be fine with staying with Hack, for the moment." Nebula added.
- "Uh... guys, hello?" He tried again, louder this time.
- "I'm guessing that Micheal wants to go home. I'd guess that he'd miss his family terribly." Mother Nature snapped.
- "Guys!" He moaned, giving up.
- "And I'd guess that after everything he's seen, and heard, he'd want to learn more!" Spindle replied.
- "Well," Hack yelled, so loud, it shocked them into silence, "How about we stop guessing and actually listen to the kid!?"
- "Now, there's an idea," Mike grinned, at Hack. "I was just tryin' to say: One, My name's not Micheal, it's Mike, or Mikey. Two, we should keep it down, little ears are listening and three, I want to speak to Hack."

They nodded, walking away. Mother Nature didn't look too happy but left anyway. When they'd gone Mike smiled at Hack.

"Lovely family, you have," He joked but Hack didn't smile.

He didn't say anything, just stared at the floor.

"You wanna go home, kid?" Hack asked.

Mike blinked. Hack was acting strange.

"W-what do you mean? Of course not!" Mike gasped.

Hack looked shocked, "Of course not!? Kid, you've been in nothing but danger, since you got here! You'll die if you stay! Why on earth would you want to!?"

"Because..." Mike didn't know what to say. He sighed, before finally answering. "Okay, promise not to laugh..."

Hack nodded, curious now.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

Hack felt a warm felling in his chest.

"Well, uh..." He hesitated, "Ain't you got family? They're probably missing you like hell!" Mike snorted with laughter, making Hack cock his head, to the side.

"Family?! Missing me!?" Mike shook his head. "My dad dissapeared one day. They found his body in our basement a few days later. An un-explainable death, as Ma and Pa called it. Except for when they're mad at me. Then he killed himself because he couldn't handle me. It was one of the strangest cases the police have ever seen."

"Who's Ma and Pa?" Hack asked, changing the subject.

"Oh... Patrick's my Step-dad. Marge and Patrick. Patrick's a druggy and Marge is... well let's just say, that I wouldn't be surprised if she had killed my dad!" Mike laughed. "Marge is my mom, unfortunately. They hate me but they keep me for child benefits."

"That's actually why I'm here. My cousin, Donny... well, he isn't my cousin, he's Ma and Pa's kid. He died of sleep-deprivation and his stuff was passed onto me. He stole this game and I got it. Those other kids in the background were my friends, Reggie, Nat and Adam. Adam's my friend, he's afraid of everything. The twins are idiots..." He stopped, realising he was rambling and that Hack was staring.

He turned to face him. Hack's mouth was gaping open and he looked slightly angry. Mike thought he'd done something wrong.

"What?" Mike asked.

"Nothing, it's just...."

Hack rubbed the back of his head, "Mikey... Okay, this is a stupid idea, but... do you want to go home?"

Mike shook his head.

"Well, then, how about... Nah, it's a stupid idea."

"No, go on!" Mike urged.

"Well, I was thinkin', maybe you would want to come live with me and... well, you know... You could become a Phobia like us. I mean, it will only be a while and if you don't like it, you can go home!"



Login

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Hack smirked at him, "Banged your leg, again, huh?"

Mike blushed, nodding.

- "Seem to be doing that a lot, kid!" He snorted at Micheals reaction.
- "In all seriousness, what do you think she'll say?" The young boy wondered.
- "You cannot, and must not let Micheal stay!" Hack laughed, putting a posh english accent on. "It will put everyones life in danger, like history repeating itself... Blardy-blardy-blarr!"

Mike chortled and sat up straight, "I know best and I guess that Micheal would want to go home... Blah, blah, blah!"

The pair snorted, making there way out of the room. They walked in to see the room in total chaos. The picture above the fire place was charred and black, the carpet was covered in ash and the couch had black footprints on it. One of the moniters were smashed and one of the lights were slightly dim now. Hack sighed, rubbing his head.

"I tell ya, kiddo," He smiled, peering up at Mike, "I don't have the knack for this!"

Mike thought for a moment. "Well, seeing as I'll be staying for a while, I might as well help you!" With those words, he started dusting the carpet. Hack tilted his head and watched.

- "Uh, what are you doing?" Hack asked.
- "Tidying... why?"
- "Well, you could just use your Ornagma."
- "My what!?" Micheal looked up at Hack who was looking quite amused.

"Ornagma," Ant muttered, sitting up and looking rather pale. "It's a feature in the game that Phobias have. It's a little like a pet job, if you know what I mean,"

Mike had no idea. He looked at Hack, who had his eyes closed and was concentrating, hard. He opened his eyes, which no longer their golden iris' or black pupil's. Instead, they were clear and white.

"Anger," A voice whispered and black tentacles rose from Hack's back. It slid away and formed into a grey wolf.

"Meet Angrophobia." Hack muttered, moving his shoulders, as if he was uncomfortable.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

Immediatley, Angrophobia started cleaning. When it was all clean, it walked back to Hack and slid back into him. He shivered and smiled at Mike, who looked horrified. He chuckled and sat. "See, easy."

"Yeah, I guess, but how do you do it?"

Hack frowned, "Well that's slightly more complicated. You see, you have to know exactly what you want it to do and you have to put all your energy into it. You'll be exhausted afterwoods. But that's only on the first time, the second times better and so on and so on, until it's a breeze! Wanna have a try?"

Micheal knew that, that wasn't really a question, but even so, he wasn't sure he wanted to.

Chapter 6: why do I call you that?

"Not right now," Just then, Toma and Grover came in. Andy smiled, weakly at the pair. Micheal grinned at his three new friends. "Maybe they could try."

"Try what?" Toma asked.

"Well, we were thinking that maybe you could try summoning your ornagma?" Mike smiled.

"My what?" She frowned.

"It doesn't matter, Hack will teach you how to summon it and you can try." Ant said.

"Well, I don't wanna." Toma said, surprising Mike.

"What, I thought you're up for anything!" He laughed.

She punched him on the shoulder.

"Ow!"

"I don't wanna, okay!" She growled, "What if I mess up!? I could hurt someone, I don't wanna go embarassing myself, anyway. It's a stupid idea! Maybe Grover could try."

The little boy sat, staring at the group. Hack smiled.

"Maybe he could!" He picked Grover up.

"Hey, Gover, wanna have a pet?" The little boy nodded his head, ferociously.

"Okay! Now, stand there and concentrate really hard. Think about your worst fear and what you think that fear would look like," Hack smiled, as he got a result. Grover shivered. "Now I

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or

Mike frowned, "I thought you said that multi-pho's were rare."

"I said they were rare not impossible!" Hack said, "They do exist. For all you know, you're a multi-pho!"

"Ant, do you want to have a go!"

"Oh, well. Maybe not. It would be vain of me to go before someone else!" Ant mumbled.

"Okay 1: No that wouldn't be vain, and 2: So what? Who the hell cares? No one else wants to go!" Micheal said.

"God cares!" Ant argued. "And don't curse! It's a sin."

"God doesn't exist," Toma sniggered.

"What!?" Ant yelled, looking mortified. "How could you say that! God is in everything and everyone. He hears everything you say and sees every sin, you do! You'll go to... you know where, if you say that!"

"Oh yeah," Hack muttered, drinking a bottle of 'Stella Artois'. "You're definitly Theophobia! Fear or hatred of God!"

"WHAT!? I... That exists?" Ant frowned.

"Yeah," Micheal grinned, slyly. "It's on the list of phobias, right next to 'upmikey!"

Ant tilted his head, to the left, "What's up-my-key?"

"Nothing, what's wrong with you?"

"W- what? I... I don't understand!" Ant bit his lip.

Toma laughed and Grover blew a rasberry. Hack patted Mike on the back.

"I'm so proud of you, right now!"

"Really? Because I'm so ashamed of myself," Mike laughed, pulling a disgusted face.

"Anyway," Hack continued, "Toma and Mike are right, Ant. Not everything is a sin. Times have changed. It's not like how it used to be. People are more open-minded about things. They've started excepting things like homo-sexuality, racial difference and stuff like that."

"I know that!" Ant blushed. "It's just... dad doesn't agree with how the world is. He says that it's full of sinful people like me and most children my age. It's nothing. I apologize for being so...

See more of Story Wars

Login

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Hack looked at the clock and whistled.

"Well, kids, it's time for bed!" He smiled at them, tapping his inventory.

Toma asked where they were sleeping and Hack chortled. He told them that they were sleeping right here. He opened a small inventory and immediately three beds and a crib appeared. Toma jumped on a bright blue bed, Ant climbed into a green bed and Mike slipped into his comfortable red bed. He noted how soft the quilt and pillows were. He rolled in the sheets, laughing. For some reason Mike felt joy, when he was in the bed.

"Wow, how did you get it this comfortable!?" Mike asked.

He looked Toma, who was fidgeting in her bed looking unpleased. Mike raised an eyebrow at Hack, who was grinning, profusely.

"Ew! Ew! Toma shrieked, leaping out.

"What!?" Hack frowned, "Didn't you want worms in your bed!?"

Toma glared at him.

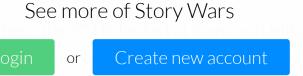
"No?" Hack smiled again, "Then stop putting them in my coffee!" He held a mug of coffee, filled with wriggling pink worms. "I saw you sneaking them in!"

Mike and Ant laughed at Toma, who had started blushing and shuddering. Hack made a new bed for her and, when she climbed in, this time she looked satisfied. She leaned back and rested her head on the pillow. Hack yawned. It was only then, that Mike realised how tired he was and how dark it had gotten. He layed back and closed his eyes. Hack walked over and put Grover in the cot. As soon as the boys head hit the pillow, he fell asleep.

Hack went to each bed and put warm milk and cookies next to the kids. They sat up, straight away. Hack sat on the floor and clicked his fingers. The lights dimmed, causing a yellow tint to fill the dark room, as if it was lit by candles. It looked beautiful.

"We'll stay up and talk for a while, whilst you finish your cookies and milk. Then it's bed time." Ant asked where the other phobias had gone.

"Oh, they've probably already arrived at Gingers. That's where we're heading but we can't right now. The night terrors act up more frequently, at night. So we can't go there, until morning or Bogy will track us."



"How'd you get the game?" Hack wondered.

"Ma and Pa's real son, Donny, had stolen the game from a shop, when no one was looking. After living with Ma and Pa, you get used to having to steal things for yourself, so he was real good at it. But when he played the game, it gave him night-terrors, until eventually he stopped sleeping. I told Ma and Pa that he needed doctors but they said no. He died from sleep-deprivation, a week later. I didn't have the heart to throw his stuff away so I played the game."

Hack patted my back. Mike smiled at him. He decided he was one of his closest friends. He didn't know if he liked him more than Andy yet but he liked him.

"How did you get here, Toma?" Ant asked.

She shrugged, looking at the floor.

"It was a present from my mom." She took a bite of her cookie and continued. "She had got it as a birthday present."

"And...?" Mike pressed.

"And what!?" She snapped.

"Well, I thought you were going to say more, that's all." He muttured.

"Well, if you want to know more, you can always do what you did to me..." He heard Ant whisper.

Mike concentrated again, like he did last time. He stared at Toma. She whimpered, resting her head on her hand. Hack and Ant watched, intrigued by this. Mike saw white. There was a woman, in a white dress, spinning with a baby boy in her arms. The woman was tall, blond and beautiful. The baby in her arms had black hair and pale skin. A man was there too. He spun another child around. This child was a girl and she was the same age as the boy. She had black hair, like the boy and man. She wore a white dress, like her mother. They were all laughing in a grassy field. They smiled, splashing through the river. Then there was a flash. The boy and girl were in the back of a car, older now. The parents were in the front. The dad driving and mom and children singing along to some songs. It was dark outside and Mike could hardly see. Then, there was two bright lights. There was a loud bang and everyone was hurled forwards. The car was spinning, as it toppled down. There was another flash.

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mother reached back, trying to grab her arm. The car lurched forwards and toppled off of the cliff. There was a choir of loud screams and then it cut to something else. Ambulances taking the twins to the hospital. The little girl sat on a bed and hearing the doctors whisper something about Grover not making it. Mike felt sick. He watched as the girl was dragged to an orphanage.

Mike was slightly confused.

If Grover died, then how-?

The next thing Mike saw, answered his question. There was a tiny baby in a cot, next to where the little girl was sat. The girl was rifling through her box of stuff, when she heard a woman whispering to another woman, near by.

"I don't know if he's going to make it. That poor boy. His parents must have been evil, abandoning him, like that!"

Hearing this, she looked at the baby in the cot.

"Does he have a name?" The other woman asked.

"No. We were thinking about calling him-"

"Grover." The girl muttured.

The women looked at her.

"His names Grover."

"Of course," One woman said, "And would you like to hold Grover, Red?"

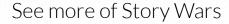
She held the boy close to her and listened as the woman explained to her friend what had happened to her parents. She held Grover close to her.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure you survive. You won't end up like Grover."

The next flash, showed a man signing some adoption papers. The papers he signed were saying that he could take Grover. Then another flash and Red was running from the orphanage, with Grover. They were then sat in an attic, where there were two head sets and helmets, like the one Mike had used. They were playing the game.

Then, Mike flashed back to reality. Red was crying.

"You see. Just a present." She sobbed.



Login

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phobia, that had the power to see into the lives of others. And the more Hack thought about it, the more he came to realise what phobia Micheal was. But he couldn't be too sure.

"Well, seeing as you've done, it's time for some shut-eye. I need to go and run some errands around the house." He stood up and stopped. There was a slight hesitation. "Night kids!" "Night Hack," Ant and Toma muttured.

"Night," Mike said, "Hey, tommorow, can we meet Ginger, Da..." He had done it again!

"You really need to watch your leg, Mikey!" Hack grinned, slyly.

"I didn't band my leg..." Mike smiled at Hack, "Goodnight, Dad."

The words took Hack by surprise. There was a loud bang, from upstairs. The three kids froze, looking frightened. "D-don't worry. I... I'll go and check it out." He said, still not daring to breathe.

When he left the room, he paused, freezing where he was and blinked, letting the feeling fully sink in. He had known that Mike had nearly accidently called him it a few times but he had never thought that, maybe... Hack shook the thought out of his head.

Mother Nature'd blow a fuse. He laughed to himself. Imagine me being a father. HA! Just the thought of it makes me... makes me... smile. And to be a father to a kid, as great as Mikey, would be amazing!

He searched upstairs for whatever made the sound and found Pyro searching his desk. Hack laughed, putting Pyro back in his bed.

"Heh, he called me dad Py," Hack smiled, stroking his pet.

He sat on his bed, "He actually called me dad."

He pulled back the covers and jumped in. He froze realising it was wet and squirmy. His eyes widened in horror, as he realised what had happened. He reached down and pulled a worm out from his bed. Meanwhile downstairs, Mike, Ant and Toma were still awake. They were talking about Hack and everything that happened.

"Well, don't know about you, but I'm shattered. I'm getting some sleep. Night you two!" Mike said.

"Oh no, wait!" Toma smiled.

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

He laughed and waited to fall asleep. Ant was the first one to sleep. He didn't take long. Then Toma. Mike was left in darkness, alone. He reflected on the day he'd had. He had met a lot of new friends. He liked almost everyone he had met so far. He wasn't too keen on Mother Nature. She wasn't very caring. Nor was he too sure on Neb. It wasn't because she was rude or mean or slack. It was because she wasn't very social. He found it hard to relate to her in any way. Maybe I'll find a way to make friends with them all, Mike smiled, I have all the time in the world. "Don't be to sure," A dark, cold voice rasped. "I'd say your time is limited, Micheal!"

Mike shot up, fear striking through his heart. The voice sent chills running up and down his back. He saw a black fog creeping through the door, in the light that shone in the gap. It lurked in and slipped onto the beds. He heard mystchievous giggles sound, as the shadows formed little black creatures, that looked like gobblins, wearing cloaks. Toma, Ant and Grover, moaned and tossed and turned in their slumber. Hacks words echoed in Mikes head.

Night Terrors act up more freguently at night. Night Terrors! Mike gasped and tried jumping out of bed but couldn't he looked up and realised that one of the Night Terrors were on top of him. It grinned and leaned forwards but something stopped it. Mike focused his eyes behind the Night Terror and froze on the spot. Behind it, stood one of the ugliest monstrosities Micheal had ever seen.

It was black, with huge purple spikes petruding from it's back. Its body was caved inwards and you could see every bone in it. It wore a mask of milk-white bone, two yellow tusks sticking out from its mouth and it eyes were green with red pupils. It had cat eyes, so the pupil was no more than a slit in the middle of a green ocean of iris. It had raptor-like feet and huge claws. The creature held a wooden staff in his right hand. It stared at Mikey with an almighty rage. Then, it grinned. Micheal didn't have to ask, he already knew who this was. Bogy.

"No," It hissed, "Not this one. This is the one I've been searching for. Young Micheal, what a huge honour it is to finally meet you." With that being said, the thing blew a black dust in his face.

Micheal woke up, in a dark land. The trees were dead and everything was broken. Grey clouds stretched across the sky, threatening to cover everything with rain. A palace made of black

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Login

or

"Oh yes, but I know you! You're the new 'son' of Hackmin, if I'm not mistaken." He gave a dry chuckle.

- "My brother always was too caring."
- "Hack's your bother!?"
- "Why, yes. So is Vendrodict, Ginger and Deji. I may have a few others, I can't remember." Bogy growled.

Micheal hesitated, looking for any trace of fault in Bogy's face. He saw non.

- "Seriously!? I hate my family, but I don't forget them!" Mike gasped.
- "You see! We are the same. Both beat up and mistreated, by our families. You must no what it felt like! Always being expected to live up to peoples expectations, because your brother was just that good," Bogy cllenched his fist.

"And never being good enough. I was forced to take action, don't you see? Deji gave me no choice. He was going to break tradition, for goodness sake. Blastphomous! He saw no reason, you see. I'm not the one who broke rules, he is! Lilac was not suitable to play the part of Empress!" Bogy stopped and peered at Mike. "I'm not saying that you'll make the same mistakes I did and attack people, but -you and I- we are the same. All this could be yours. No worries, no hurt, no pain, no people. All you have to do..."

Micheal looked at the man.

"Is surrender yourself, to the darkness. Tell me what phobias your friends are and give up Hackmin. Bring him to me!"

Mike sighed and rubbed his neck, looking as if he was thinking about it.

"So, I just give information and Hack, and I become a dark prince, like you?" Micheal smiled. "You must be crazier then I thought! Why on earth, would I give up my friends- no, let me reitterate that- my family, to become as lonely and living a depressing life, as you, huh? No way!" Bogy chuckled, quietly.

"Smart ass, heh heh," He looked up at him, his eyes hollow and dark, now. "Mikey, mikey, mikey,"

See more of Story Wars

Login

or

"Macky, Macky. Are you okay?" The voice was angeling and soft. "Don't try to move, Macky. My name's crystal. I'm Flora and Neb's daughter. You're ill, okay? Don't talk or move. You need to rest. I'm going to tell mom and momma that you're hear okay?"

With that, she rushed away, leaving Mike blind and injured. He had no idea how he'd gotten where he was but he didn't care. He wanted his friends. Anyone. There was a sudden yell, making him jump. He, then, felt some people by his side.

"Mikey, are you okay, kid!?" He heard a familiar voice. He felt a warm buzz on his forehead and, when he blinked he could see again. Nebula was at his side, holding him.

"He's okay, Flora. Crystal, go inform Mother Na-"

"No," Mike managed to say.

Nebula, understanding, tried again, "Go tell Father Time, that Mikes here. Hack will be happy to know."

"H-Hack?" Micheal stuttered.

He tried asking what she meant, but his head was swimming and he passed out again.

Chapter 7: Finally here!

When he woke, later, he heard the whistle of a kettle. He looked around, at the room he was in. It was spacious and tidy. The walls had wall paper, covered in little pink and blue flowers all over it. The carpet was a dark blue and had zig-zag pattern on it. The window was big and he had a view of the river, from where he was. He noticed that he was wearing a different outfit, than he was earlier. He was wearing blue jeans now and no top. He examined his chest it had a weird symble branded into it. A red arrow, pointing south-west. He frowned, then looked up to see what was going on. Nebula was messing with cups and tea-spoons. She was wearing a different outfit too.

She wore a black vest top and blue shorts. Mike sat up and immediatley, the smell of bacon hit his nose. He smiled at the beautiful scent. Then he hesitated.

"Hey, Nebula!" He said, so loud he shocked himself.

She jumped, yelping and nearly dropping the frying pan, she held.

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"Kid! Do you realise how long you'd been gone!? Hack said that he had heard someone creeping around the house and when he went downstairs to check on you, he found Night Terrors sat on Red, Ant and Grover. You were nowhere to be seen. You should have seen how worried he was. Hack was practically crying. He said stuff like he was a terrible father and Mother Nature was right. He said that there was no trace of you leaving. It was like someone had teleported you away, or somethin;"

Mike clenched his jaw and fist, in anger.

"Bogyman..." He whispered, as the night before swam back to him.

"What was that?" Flora asked, walking into the room.

"Bogy, I was with him last night." Mike looked up at their worried faces. "He told me that I was the same as him and that I could be a dark prince, if I..."

"If you...?" Nebula urged.

"If I told him what phobia my friends were and handed Hack over. Of course, I didn't. And I couldn't, even if I wanted to. I don't know what phobias everyone is and Hack's like a dad to me. I just... couldn't."

Neb and Flora relaxed. They ate their breakfast and talked about what Bogy could be planning. Eventually, when they had come to a dead-end they sat in silence.

"Well, we know it has something to do with peoples fears and the Night Terrors. But what else can we put together?" Flora wondered.

"We don't know if it has anything to do with Hack yet. But one thing I'm sure of, is that you are part of this. He needs you, for soemthing, or he would have killed you, when he had the chance. He said that you were... the one." Neb muttured 'the one' as if it was sacred.

Flora explained to Micheal about a prophecy Deji's father had one told.

There would be four royals. The GPOG, the PPOD, the POPK and the YD. The POG was the Prince Of Good. The POD was The Prince Of Darkness. This was refering to Deji and Bogy, of course. The POPK was the Princess Of Peace Keeping. Finally, the YD was the Young Decider. One day, the PPOD would betray his brevrin and would break the POPK's throne. Then the

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"That's where you'd come in, well... if you are what Bogy says." Neb said. "If you are the one... well, then you'd be the Young Decider."

Mike sat in stunned silence. He gazed at the pair, quite taken aback. He was a little frightened by the news. He wanted to inch back, like a coward. He had never been put in a position like this. Then, suddenly and without warning Neb took his hand. She put her other hand on his cheek and stared into his eyes.

"Mikey, I don't know if you're the YD, but if you are then I am so glad that it isn't anyone else. I don't know you too well, but what I do know is that you are the bravest person, I've ever met." There was something in her words that gave Micheal courage.

He felt something familiar. He felt like this when Nat or Reggie would jump out of cupboards and tried to scare him. When it didn't always work, he'd always feel pride, at not scaring easily. That same pride filled him. He smiled, bravery running through him. He heard someone gasp behind him and the thudding. He turned, but not quick enough. The huge black creature lept at him and he felt like he was drowning again. He saw huge teeth and a long tongue. He looked down the creatures long throat and saw a large orange growing in it. There was a gurgling sound and suddenly Mike realised who it was.

"Py, no!" He yelled, pushing the animal off of him, just in time for fire and lava to pour out of it's mouth.

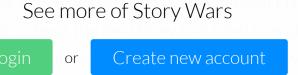
"Bad Py-o!" Grover spat at the creature.

"Mikey!" Hack yelled, going red in the face. He jumped onto the bed and grabbed Mike by his hair. "Don't you ever scare me like that again, do you hear me!? Oh I'm so glad you're okay! I could hug you! I'm gonna kill you! For god sake, I thought you were dead! I didn't know what to think! I was so furious! I was so scared! I'm so glad, you're okay!" He hugged the boy. Mike laughed and flicked Hack's hat.

"I'm okay, pops. I was still awake, after the others fell asleep and the Night Terrors were there. I-

Hack, Flora and Nebs face paled.

"You were awake, whilst Night Terrors were there!?"



forest. The forest had a stream running through it. It was freezing. Suddenly, a log went speading past, in the river. Ant was chasing after it, on the opposite side of the bank. He was laughing and smiling. Toma, Karma and Crystal were in the log, heading for the waterfall. Grover was sat in a puddle, playing with a weird little cat person. The cat smiled at Mike. "Ahh. Master Micheal!" She smiled.

"Um, call me Mikey, please." Mike shook her hand.

"Uh..." She thought for a second, before shrugging. "As you wish, Mikey."

"Mikey!" Grover laughed, beconing for him to come over. Mike sat in the mud, next to Grover and watched, as the little boy pull a little brown worm. Mike grinned and Grover laughed. Then he tipped his head back and dropped the worm in his mouth. Mike watched, in horror, as Grover giggled, swallowing it whole. Anyese- the cat lady- smiled, clapping her hands.

"Very good, Grover!" Mike stared at her. She shrugged, helplessly. "What!? Eating a worm, not bad! Give you lots of protein!"

"Yo! Anyese! I need help with the garden." Spindle leaned over a gate. He had mud smeared across his face and his clothes and boots were chest deep in thick oozing mud. He smiled at Mike. "Yo, kid, you look like you don't mind getting dirty. Wanna come an' help in the garden."

Mike, immediatley got up and rushed over to help. Spindle helped him over the garden fence. Mike grabbed a shovel and looked around, in amazment. It was less of a garden and more of a field. There were people every where. A tall black man walked over to Mike. He had black bat-like wings hanging from his back. His mouth was stitched closed. He wore a white top, underneath blue overalls and a straw hat.

"Mike, this is Sedatephopia. Just call him Seda. He's the fear of silence, so he can't speak." Spindle explained.

Seda smiled and gave a nod. Mike trying not to feel intimidated, by Seda's tallness, nodded back and gave a weak grin. The man laughed, doing a sign language. A small creature walked behind him.

"Hi, I'm Automatonophobia. You just call me Auto. I speak for Seda." The man was a puppet. He was fury and had glassy green eyes.

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indulged in his work that he didn't realise, that Spindle and the others had stopped to watch him. A few moments passed and Spindle told him to stop.

"Okay, you've done good, Mikey. It's time to go wash yourself up." He laughed, patting him on the back. "Go to the river and play with your friends, again."

Mike rushed off. Anyese and Grover had disappeared, so he went to wash in the river, instead. He looked at his reflection, in the water. He smiled. He could get used to this. There was a splash and he looked up to see the others running to him.

Karma hugged him.

"Mikey! Guess what. We were just playing on the log ride. Wanna come?" She asked.

Mike felt exhausted. He looked up at his friends beaming faces. Crystal and Toma were sweating, Ant looked full of energy. Ant didn't have a drop of water on him, whilst the others were soaked from head to toe.

"Haven't you had a go, Ant?" Mike asked.

"Nah, I was waiting for you!" Ant shrugged.

Mike stood and put Karma down. Toma raised an eyebrow and whistled. She crossed her arms and leaned back, against the tree.

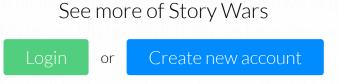
"Wit-whoo!" She grinned, "Strike a pose, Micheal!"

Jokingly, he hunched forwards and flexed his, non-existant muscles. They laughed.

"Come on then!" Karma smiled, rushing up the hill.

They all followed. The top of the hill was covered in rock, like a mountain and water spat and sprayed, from churning so furiously in its bank. The log was tied to a stick in the ground. Sreadily Mike and Ant made their way in. Everything shook. Mike was full of adreniline, as they detached the rope and they sped off. They laughed, whooped and screamed as they hit rocks and zoomed down the river bends. They were joyous, in the whole exhilerating ride. The others chased after them, until they got to the bottom of the river. The girls grabbed the rope, to stop the log. There was a loud scream and Mike looked back. His eyes widened, in horror, as he was the rope snap. He saw Ant pale.

"Oh hell!" Ant screamed as they toppled down the waterfall.



his terror, he didn't see anyone. Voices yelled above him. Without thinking, he swam underwater. Ant was trapped under the log. He was struggling to get out. Mike tried pushing the log. Ant was starting to see black. He grew still. That was enough to scare Mike. Adrenaline rushed through him and he pushed with all his strength. The log didn't moved. There was a splash, as crystal dived in. She swam down, effortlessly. She put hef feet and fin on the log and moved it away and Mike dragged Ant to the surface. He pumped his chest and water spluttered out of him. Mike sighed, happily, seeing him open his eyes. He slid into the grass and lay, silently, gasping for air. Ant laughed and sat up.

He jumped up, taking Mike by surprise. Crystal swam out and spun with Ant.

"Wow! Did you see that!?" He laughed, "We were in the log, heading down the stream and then we toppled over the edge and it was like we were flying. I said hell! What the hell! I've never been so energetic. Oh god.... Oh my god!" He smiled, sitting back down.

Mike propped himself up on his elbows, grinning. He watched, as Ant ruffled his hair. There was a call from above and they saw their friends waving at them. They climbed the large slope and joined them. Their friends laughed and swam in the river. They each had a go sliding down the waterfall. Mike went to sit down, later. Crystal and the others joined him.

She smiled at him and they stared chatting.

"So what phobia are you?" Mike asked.

"Ablutophobia! Fear of washing or bathing." Crystal replied, "You?"

"Dunno yet." Mike peered at her. She appeared squeaky clean. "You haven't got a speak of dirt on you, how can you be Ablutophobia? It's the same with your moms. Neb's a space person, yet she's fear of space. Flora's fear of water but she's a fish-person. It makes no-" Crystal started laughing.

"That's not how it works. We're supposed to scare people, it doesn't mean we are afraid of that thing." She paused, "Though, momma says that, that's how phobias came to be. Phobias were just people who feared things the most and when they over-came those fears, they taught others how to not be afraid."



Mike thought for a second. "Why does he keep kids up?"

"I don't know." Crystal shrugged.

The others clenched their fists. Everything was silent.

Mikes mind snapped to Dony, "Dony hadn't slept in ages and died. Is he trying to kill eveyone? Maybe, but why? Hatred, jealousy or just spite? No, it has to be something else. Something deeper. Crystal, would Bogy be able to leave the game?"

"I think so, why?" Crystal asked.

"Exactly, why? So he'd be able to leave the game but then what? He'd kill everyone but why? There's no reason for him to do that. He's already got everything." Mike scratched his head.

"Maybe he just wants to rule everything, for the fun of it." Toma muttered.

"No. He's not like that. He's an evil man but not a pety child. He must have some objective. There has to be a reason why. I know this guy. I've only met him once but already, I know him. It was so completely obvious that he wanted something but I couldn't have guessed what, if I tried."

There was the sound of someone clearing their throats, behind them. Hack and Pyro were stood, smiling at them.

"Po-" Mike stopped. Blood trickled from a large cut on his face. "What happened to you?" "Huh? Oh, Mother Nature was mad at me when I told her about, well you know... about letting you call me dad and letting you live with me. She got mad and hit me."

Mike frowned.

"Don't worry, kid. The others got in and got 'er off of me. They told her that even if she didn't want you to stay, they did."

Mike hugged Hack.

"Yeah, you're gonna have to show her you're strong enough to cope with this place. We're ruitin' for ya kid!"

Chapter 2 by Lucas Tye



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